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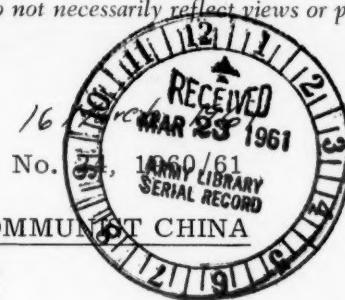
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Outline Of Reference Paper On:

COMPETITION BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA IN AFRICA AND THE NEAR EAST



by

A. Kashin

The author of this analysis, A. Kashin, began his research on China at the University of Shanghai where he was a student at the Institute of Orientalists. The seizure of Shanghai by the Communists forced him to move. In 1952, he arrived in Europe where he has lived since. A frequent lecturer to German academic audiences on China and Sino-Soviet relations, he has also written on topics in this field for various publications. His contributions to the knowledge of China include a 200-page monograph, The People's Liberation Army of China. A book of Kashin's, Shanghai--My Fate, will appear in German this year.

Serious differences in attitudes toward the young, newly-developing countries of Asia and Africa further strain the already tense relations between the USSR and the People's Republic of China.

One of the most obvious disagreements results from the Soviet preparedness to support any African or Near Eastern government which follows a neutralist line. The Chinese Communists would permit themselves to be friendly only with Communist or pro-Communist countries.

Competition between the two monoliths of the Communist camp arises also as Red China bids against the Soviet Union with more favorable terms of its economic aid to the new countries of Africa and Asia.

The advantages of Red China over the Soviet Union in this competition, inherent in its freedom from international agreements and in its primitiveness, are offset by its remoteness and by the dearth of suitable bases between it and Africa for the penetration of that country.

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Though Soviet and Communist Chinese policies coincide in some areas of the world, such as the Congo, there is much evidence of serious differences between the USSR and the People's Republic of China in their attitudes toward the "colonial and dependent" countries. Differences of this kind between the Soviet and Communist Chinese standpoints began to come to the fore after Stalin's death, when the USSR embarked on an active policy of gaining a foothold in those African and Near Eastern countries about to gain independence. On the surface, these disagreements seem to be only of tactical nature, not in conflict with the long-range Communist plans. Whether or not this is so is an important question deserving study.

For immediate practical purposes, the difference is that Premier Khrushchev is prepared to support any African or Near Eastern government which follows a neutral line in foreign policy whereas the Chinese Communists are interested mainly in Communist and pro-Communist forces. For instance, in the case of Egypt the Chinese Communists object to the close co-operation of the Soviet government with Nasser while Nasser is suppressing the Communists at home. They insist that unless Nasser alters his attitude toward Communism, the Communist bloc should refuse to support him.

The differing approaches of the two countries to colonial liberation were clearly illustrated during the celebrations in 1959 marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Chinese People's Republic. Although Khrushchev, just returned from the United States, had proclaimed the principle of peaceful co-existence and was anxious to establish friendly relations with the neutral Afro-Asian

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bloc in preparation for such co-existence, the Chinese Communists selected this very moment to demonstrate their opposing standpoint. During the celebrations in Peking, various leading Communists from the African and Near Eastern countries made speeches in which they attacked the governments of their countries as "lackeys of Western imperialism." Particularly untimely for the Soviet government was a speech by a Syrian Communist, Khalid Begtash, who declared that "the people of the United Arab Republic are suffering today under the terrorist dictatorship of a regime which applies fascist methods of government to crush all the national democratic forces in the country" (Hsinhua, Communist Chinese news agency, Peking, September 29, 1959).

This incident, which threatened diplomatic relations between Communist China and the United Arab Republic, is a good example of the manner in which China supports forces in Africa and the Near East from which the USSR is careful to keep at a distance. A comparison of the delegations from Africa and the Near East which have visited the USSR and which have visited Red China in the last two years also indicates that the two countries are relying on the support of different forces and different social groups. Those which visit Moscow are official government delegations, whereas Peking receives Communists working in the underground. The Chinese offer these countries their own and not the Soviet path to socialism and Communism; an official Red Chinese statement to this effect was made in 1949 by the now President of the Republic Liu Shao-chi (Hsinhua, October 9, 1949).

As it is, any Soviet efforts to gain a stronger foothold in Africa and the Near East are regarded by the Red Chinese as interference in their sphere of influence, and their resentment is strengthened by the fact that the Soviets are using methods of which the Chinese do not approve. Though an open struggle for influence may not be taking place, there is certainly some competition. Peking is using the most varied methods in its efforts to demonstrate to leftist governments the advantages of the Red Chinese methods of development and of co-operation with it. In Guinea, for example, the Chinese are competing with the USSR in a sphere in which one would not expect to find them--that of economic aid. As recently as September 1960, an agreement signed in Peking committed 100 million rubles worth of Chinese economic and technical aid to Guinea under much more favorable terms than those offered by the Soviets to the African, Near Eastern and East European countries. Credit was granted free of interest, and Red Chinese specialists in Guinea were obliged to live and work under the same conditions as the local population (Hsinhua, September 16, 1960).

The Chinese Party leaders are also relying on various psychological factors which give them advantages over the Soviets. China is an Asian country, while most African and Near Eastern peoples regard the USSR as

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partially responsible for the colonial policies of the past. China can thus claim a better understanding of the problems of the former colonies. Further, Soviet industry is now at a stage of development at which its example cannot be of much help to the underdeveloped countries, whereas China is just beginning to build up its industry and is doing so under the most primitive conditions, similar to those prevailing in Africa and some countries of the Near East.

A major Red Chinese handicap is the absence of suitable places between China and the Near East which the Red Chinese could use as bases or transfer points for penetration of Africa. This is evidently one of the reasons for the Chinese efforts to woo Albania. Such efforts were noticeable during the summer of 1960, in the period of the Moscow conference, immediately after it, and, in the differing attitudes of Moscow and Peking toward the Albanian Party Congress in February, 1961.

Another reason for Red China's greater aggressiveness concerning the newly developing countries probably lies in its isolation from the free world, and particularly in the absence of any international guarantees and obligations with the United States and Western Europe. Whereas the USSR, in its policy toward Africa and the Near East, is compelled to maneuver between efforts to improve relations with Great Britain and France and to drive a wedge between them and the United States, Communist China does not have to take note of such considerations. This explains why Peking long ago recognized the Algerian rebels as the de facto and de jure government of the country, while the Soviet Union dared to recognize them only as the de facto government, and this only after Communist Chinese activities in Algeria had compelled it to take concrete steps.

In regard to the Congo Peking has adopted the Soviet standpoint. The reason is probably that Soviet policy has been extremely aggressive and in line with Chinese views. Peking supports the Soviet attacks on U. N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold and draws a parallel between the events in the Congo and in Korea. A lead article in the Peking newspaper Jenmin Jihpao (People's Daily) of February 16, 1961, entitled "In The Congo As In Korea The United Nations forces are a weapon of American imperialism," asserted that the U. N. forces in the Congo were under the control of U. S. government.

Presumably, Chinese penetration of Africa and the Near East has not yet reached its zenith. Red China's aims and methods are clear to the Soviet government. Since they are generally incompatible with Khrushchev's policy, we can conclude that in the future, too, there will be Sino-Soviet rivalry in these two areas of the world.